



Line Items

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NEW WAYS TO USE ELECTRICITY



If you listen carefully, you can hear a *quiet* transformation happening. Electric appliances and equipment are becoming more popular than ever among consumers. Advancements in technology and battery power coupled with decreasing costs are winning over consumers looking for comparable utility and versatility. A bonus is that use of electric equipment is quieter and better for the environment.

Inside the home, consumers and homebuilders alike are turning to electric appliances to increase energy efficiency and savings. Whether a traditional electric stove or an induction stove top, both are significantly more efficient than a gas oven. That's because conventional residential cooking tops typically use gas or resistance heating elements to transfer energy with efficiencies of

approximately 32% and 75% respectively (according to ENERGY STAR®). Electric induction stoves, which cook food without any flame, will reduce indoor air pollution and can bring water to a boil about twice as fast as a gas stove. Robotic vacuums are also gaining in popularity.

More tools and equipment with small gas-powered motors are being replaced with electric ones that include plug-in batteries. In the past few years, technology in battery storage has advanced significantly. Hand-held tools with plug-in batteries can hold a charge longer and offer the user the same versatility and similar functionality as gas-powered tools. For DIYers and those in the building trades, tool brands are now offering electric versions of their most popular products like drills, saws, sanders and other tools. In addition to standard offerings, consumers can now purchase a wider array of specialty tools that plug-in such as power inverters, air inflators and battery chargers.

Keith Dennis, an energy industry expert and president of the Beneficial Electrification League notes that, "A few years back, the list of new electric product categories that were making their way to the market was limited--electric scooters, lawn mowers, leaf blowers and vehicles."

Today, the number of electric products available is exploding.

"There are electric bikes, school buses, pressure washers, utility terrain vehicles, backhoes--even airplanes and boats," says Dennis. "With the expansion of batteries and advancements in technology, we are seeing almost anything that burns gasoline or diesel as having an electric replacement available on the market."

A case in point is the increased use of electric-powered tools and equipment, with more national brands offering a wider selection including lawn mowers, leaf blowers, string trimmers and snow blowers. The quality of zero- or low-emissions lawn equipment is also improving.

Electric equipment also requires less maintenance, and often the biggest task is keeping them charged. In addition, electric equipment is quieter so if you want to listen to music or your favorite podcast while performing outdoor work, you can; something that wouldn't be possible with gas-powered equipment. On the horizon, autonomous lawn mowers (similar to the robotic vacuum cleaners) will be seen dotting outdoor spaces.

Another benefit of using electric appliances or equipment is that by virtue of being plugged into the grid, the environmental performance of electric devices improves over time. In essence, electricity is becoming cleaner through increases in renewable energy generation, so equipment that uses electricity will have a diminishing environmental impact over time. Quite a hat trick--improving efficiency, quality of life *and* helping the environment.

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Joseph Jones
Editor

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Between the Lines

by **Greg Proctor**
President/CEO

Factors That Impact Electricity Prices

I was recently asked by one of our members about what impacts electricity prices. We talked about how the daily cost of living seems to have increased across the board.

Just as inflation has impacted everything from the price of gasoline to the price of eggs, costs for the fuels required to produce electricity have also risen.

While there is no short answer, there are a few key elements that impact electricity prices and rates. Some of these factors Excelsior EMC can manage, some of them you can impact, and other factors are beyond our control. So, let me break it down.

There are three primary parts to your monthly electric bill: a base charge, an energy charge, and a Wholesale Power Cost Adjustment (WPCA). To understand your total energy costs and what impacts your bill, let's examine their components.

The first is a fixed monthly base charge, which covers the costs associated with providing electricity to your home. This includes equipment, materials, labor and operating costs necessary to serve each meter in Excelsior EMC's service territory, regardless of the amount of energy used. In order to ensure the reliable service you expect and deserve, we must maintain the local system, including power lines, substations and other necessary equipment. Like many other businesses, we've experienced supply chain issues and steep cost increases for some of our basic equipment. For example, the cost for a distribution transformer went from \$840 in 2021 to \$1300 this year and wait times to receive essential pieces of equipment are up to 3 years. Because we are a not-for-profit cooperative, some of these expenses must be passed on to our members.

Another component of your monthly bill is the kWh charge (energy charge), which covers how much energy you consume. You've likely noticed the amount of energy you use can vary from month to month and is typically impacted by extreme temperatures. When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling and heating equipment runs longer, which increases your home energy use. Regardless, energy consumption is an area that you have some control over, and you can lower your monthly bill by actively reducing energy use. Your thermostat is a great place to start, so be sure to keep it close to 78 degrees during summer months and 68 degrees in the winter months.

The last component of your bill is the WPCA (Wholesale Power Cost Adjustment), which is the same amount for all co-op members. The WPCA changes as the cost of power that Excelsior EMC purchases from our wholesale provider changes. The WPCA covers fuel cost fluctuations without having to continually restructure electricity rates.

I hope this information sheds light on some of the factors that impact electricity prices. While we can't control the weather or the fluctuating cost of fuels, please know Excelsior EMC is doing everything possible to keep internal costs down.

We're here to help you, too. Contact us if you have questions about your energy bill or for advice on how to save energy at home.



Every Member Counts

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS



MAKE A PLAN



BUILD A KIT



STAY INFORMED

WE'RE READY FOR STORM SEASON... ARE YOU?

Summer months make conditions right for dangerous storms. These potential weather events can cause destruction to our electrical system, but we want you to know that Excelsior EMC crews are ready and standing by to respond should power outages occur in our area.

When major storms knock out power, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines. We would encourage you to also practice safety and preparedness to protect your family during major storms and outages.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommends the items below as a starting point for storm and disaster preparedness, but you can visit www.ready.gov for additional resources.

Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-perishable food, such as canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, instant coffee, water and other essentials (i.e., diapers and toiletries).

Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies including towelettes, soap and hand sanitizer.

Ensure your First Aid kit is stocked with pain relievers, bandages and other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.

Set aside basic household items you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual

can opener and portable, battery-powered radio or TV.

Organize emergency supplies so they are easily accessible in one location.

In the event of a prolonged power outage, turn off major appliances, TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics. This will help avert damage from a power surge, and will also help prevent overloading the circuits during power restoration. That said, do leave one light on so you will know when power is restored. If you plan to use a small generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely.

After the storm, avoid downed power lines and walking through flooded areas where power lines could be submerged. Allow ample room for utility crews to safely perform their jobs, including on your property.

Advance planning for severe storms or other emergencies can reduce stress and anxiety caused by the weather event and can lessen the impact of the storm's effects.

We hope we don't experience severe storms this year, but we can never predict Mother Nature's plans. At Excelsior EMC, we recommend that you act today because there is power in planning. From our co-op family to yours, we hope you have a safe and wonderful summer.



**HELPING POWER A
BRIGHTER FUTURE.**

**Best wishes
to our local
students during
the upcoming
school year!**

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month:

Look for LED products and fixtures for outdoor use, such as pathway, step, and porch lights. Many include features like automatic daylight shut-off and motion sensors. You can also find solar-powered lighting for outdoor spaces.

Source: energy.gov



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